

STATE OF DELAWARE



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT DOVER

EXECUTIVE ORDER
NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

TO: HEADS OF ALL STATE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES
RE: EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education and the State Department of Public Instruction ("DPI") and their partners (a broad-based group comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, local school board members, higher education representatives, legislators and business leaders, hereinafter the "New Directions Partners") are providing leadership for the development and implementation of a standards-based, comprehensive reform agenda called New Directions for Education in Delaware that seeks to achieve excellence and equity for all Delaware students; and

WHEREAS, in Fall 1993, a report entitled the "Delaware Gap Analysis" was produced as a result of the leadership of the Business/Public Education Council in order to identify the measures Delaware needs to take to create an excellent public school system;

WHEREAS, that report made 17 recommendations to improve the effectiveness of Delaware's public school system, many of which are in the process of being implemented; and

WHEREAS, among these are recommendations to implement school-based decisionmaking, hold schools accountable for the educational results they produce and deregulate our school system; and

WHEREAS, allowing school communities -- teachers, parents and principals -- to determine the best approach to educating children in their schools is critical to educational improvement; and

WHEREAS, cutting regulatory red tape and restricted unit-driven funding will enable school communities to make the key decisions about how the children in their schools should be taught and how resources should be allocated within schools; and

WHEREAS, by making schools the focal point for these key decisions, Delaware can encourage maximal parental involvement in education; and

WHEREAS, at the same time as decisionmaking and greater fiscal flexibility is vested in school communities, a mechanism must be put in place to hold schools accountable for the educational performance of their students, so that action can be taken to reward and build upon school successes and to remedy school failures, so that schools use state tax dollars productively and so that parents can answer the question "How successful is my child's school?"; and

WHEREAS, the role of DPI must change from one of regulatory oversight to that of an agency which serves as an expert consultant for local schools, oversees the establishment

of high statewide standards and holds schools accountable for educational results; and

WHEREAS, fundamentally transforming the relationships among DPI, local school districts and schools, and creating a new method of educational accountability based on school performance will require major changes in the way our school system currently operates; and

WHEREAS, to effect such change Delaware must involve all affected constituencies, particularly parents, students, teachers, administrators, school board members and community and business leaders, in the reform process; and

WHEREAS, the Gap Analysis recognizes that such reform, while necessary to educational improvement, will not succeed unless our State can find the resources to ensure that our children come to school ready to learn, receive adequate instructional time, and receive the services needed to ensure that the problems they face outside of school do not impede their learning, and that the teachers who teach our children have ongoing access to high-quality professional development opportunities; and

WHEREAS, to implement many of the worthy ideas set forth by the Gap Analysis to address these needs will require new expenditures of tens of millions of dollars annually unless major changes in current spending occur; and

WHEREAS, before asking Delawareans to pay more to fund new educational initiatives, it is imperative that

we examine ways to reallocate these current expenditures within the education system to more productive uses; and

WHEREAS, the involvement of the State's business community through the Business/Public Education Council in helping our school system examine the way it allocates expenditures is critical since our business community has been forced by the marketplace to produce more for less and has the expertise to help our educational system do the same; and

WHEREAS, it is important to look at expenditure issues along with other Gap Analysis recommendations since the success of education reforms in Delaware depends on our collective ability to craft a comprehensive reform agenda that takes into account the interrelationship and interdependence of policies and practices in all areas of our school system, and that aligns these policies and practices in a coherent and efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, the development of such a complete and coherent reform initiative is consistent and should be coordinated with Delaware's implementation of the new federal Goals 2000: Educate America Act ("Goals 2000"), which offers substantial funding to support and strengthen Delaware's education reform efforts, contingent upon the development of a state improvement plan addressing many concerns already targeted by New Directions and the Gap Analysis; and

WHEREAS, a broad-based Commission supported by the Business/Public Education Council and the State Board of

Education is needed to develop a plan for school-based decisionmaking and accountability, to deregulate our school system, to maximize the impact of educational expenditures so that the recommendations of the Gap Analysis can be implemented cost-effectively, and to oversee the state improvement planning process called for by Goals 2000.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, THOMAS R. CARPER, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of Delaware, do hereby order and declare that:

1. The Education Improvement Commission (the "Commission") is hereby established.
2. The Commission's membership shall be appointed by me and shall reflect the many constituencies concerned about the effectiveness of Delaware's public schools, including parents, teachers, school boards, school administrators, and the business and labor communities. The Co-Chairpersons of the Commission shall be John W. Jardine, Jr. and Richard W. Vague. Co-Chairpersons of the Commission's Subcommittees shall be appointed by me from among the Commission's members. As needed, the Commission may invite other persons to contribute their expertise and input as active, regular participants in the work of the Commission's subcommittees.
3. To ensure the coherence of the Commission's recommendations with other ongoing educational initiatives, Commission members shall be briefed at the outset of their work

and updated regularly by DPI and the New Directions Partners on the underlying philosophy and critical strategies and initiatives of: a) New Directions, particularly the development of new standards and assessments; b) the April 1994 report, "Building Local Capacity to Implement New Directions," (the "Capacity Report") developed and endorsed through a consensus process by 13 organizations representing key education stakeholders; c) the requirements and provisions of Goals 2000, so that the work of the Commission will advance and be consistent with the development of a state improvement plan in conformity with that legislation; d) the School-to-Work Planning Council established by Executive Order 17; and e) the Educational Technology Task Force established by H.J.R. 27 of the 137th General Assembly. The Commission shall also be briefed on the principles and substantive research underlying the Gap Analysis report, and ensure that the Gap Analysis recommendations already being implemented are integrated with the Commission's recommendations.

4. The Commission shall propose legislation by April 1, 1995 to implement the Gap Analysis' recommendations that Delaware: a) restructure the relationship between and clarify the roles and responsibilities of its state and local school authorities; b) increase the decisionmaking authority of school communities; c) establish a mechanism to hold schools accountable for their educational results when measured against the standards set by New Directions; and d) reduce regulatory red tape and state funding restrictions that limit the flexibility of school

communities to make the key decisions about how their schools should operate. The Commission shall issue an accompanying final report explaining the basis for the legislation it proposes. It shall issue an interim report on its progress by January 15, 1995, including therein the reports of the subcommittees established by paragraphs 5 and 6 of this Order.

5. To facilitate the development of the legislation referenced in paragraph 4 of this Order, a subcommittee of the Commission on governance (the "Governance and Accountability Subcommittee") shall be established and shall submit to the Commission on or before January 15, 1995 a draft of the legislation required by paragraph 4 of this Order and an accompanying report. In preparing the legislation, the Governance and Accountability Subcommittee shall address the Gap Analysis recommendations regarding school-based decisionmaking; deregulation; and rewards, assistance and consequences related to school performance. The Governance and Accountability Subcommittee shall consider implications for student equity, professional development, and professional compensation and incentives.

6. A subcommittee of the Commission on financial issues shall be established (the "Finance Subcommittee"). The Finance Subcommittee shall undertake a thorough examination of the way federal, state and local education tax dollars are channeled, allocated and utilized, with a view toward getting more out of our current expenditures. The Finance Subcommittee

shall solicit ideas for efficiencies from employees of the school system and from members of the public, and shall ask Delaware companies to lend to the Finance Subcommittee the time of employees with experience in increasing productivity, reducing unnecessary costs and improving financial management. No later than January 15, 1995, the Finance Subcommittee shall deliver its report to the Commission and accompanying legislation identifying with specificity statutory, budgetary, programmatic and policy changes that could be made which would: a) improve the educational benefits of programs without increasing expenditures (e.g., maximizing the positive effect of expenditures on teacher training, in-service days and continuing education); b) enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of current programs while freeing up dollars to finance other currently unfunded educational priorities (e.g., providing extra instructional time for children); c) eliminate unnecessary expenditures; d) streamline financial management practices; and e) otherwise improve in a revenue-neutral way the financing of education and the impact of educational expenditures in Delaware. It is my intent to recommend that cost savings generated through this process be reallocated for educational purposes. The Commission shall incorporate in its final report such recommendations of the Finance Subcommittee as it deems meritorious, after holding public hearings regarding the Finance Subcommittee's recommendations.

7. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall, after consultation with the New Directions Partners and the Family Services Cabinet Council, provide the Finance Subcommittee with a priority list of initiatives that he believes are necessary to improve Delaware's education system (e.g., New Directions priorities, initiatives in the areas of school readiness, student instructional time, school technology, school-linked social services, school-to-work transition and professional development). This priority list shall include DPI's recommendations for implementing the recommendations of the Gap Analysis and the Capacity Report other than those to be addressed by the Governance and Accountability Subcommittee. The list shall be accompanied by an estimate of the costs of each recommendation. In preparing its recommendations under subparagraph 6 of this Order, the Finance Subcommittee shall attempt to identify efficiencies sufficient to enable the implementation of the priority list on a revenue-neutral basis.

8. A subcommittee of the Commission on communications (the "Communications Subcommittee") shall be established. The Communications Subcommittee shall devise and implement a plan to communicate effectively the work of the Commission for the primary purpose of obtaining widespread public participation in the Commission's work and promoting public involvement in the education reform efforts underway in Delaware. Toward this end, throughout the process of developing its recommendations, the Commission and its subcommittees shall hold public hearings

throughout Delaware to hear from constituents and employees of our school system on their ideas and views regarding these issues. In advance of such hearings, the Communications Subcommittee shall send invitations to community and business groups, school system employees, and educational organizations (particularly organizations of parents interested in education) and otherwise ensure wide public notice of the hearings. The Commission's communications plan should be harmonized with other communications initiatives being undertaken by the State Board of Education and local districts with regard to New Directions, as well as the requirements of the Goals 2000 planning process.

9. During the period from the issuance of this Order to June 30, 1995, the Commission shall also serve as an advisory panel on Goals 2000. The Commission shall oversee the development of a state improvement plan in line with the requirements of the Goals 2000 legislation, to be completed by May 15, 1995. This work shall proceed simultaneously with the completion of the Commission's other duties. The state improvement planning process should further Delaware's ongoing effort to implement a comprehensive and coherent set of initiatives necessary to improve Delaware's education system, and shall encompass New Directions and the work of the Commission pursuant to this Order. It shall also include recommendations for use and distribution of the federal funding available to Delaware to support the implementation of the state improvement plan. Following completion of the state plan, the

Commission will be reconfigured to comprise a new body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Goals 2000 state improvement plan.

10. DPI, the State Budget Office and the Department of Finance shall provide staff assistance to the Commission. The Commission shall seek additional staff support from the Controller General's Office, Delaware's business community, its public universities and its local school districts.

APPROVED this 22nd day of August, 1994.


Governor

ATTEST:


Secretary of State

